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October 7, 1974

Dr. Judith Shklar,<sup>e</sup>  
Department of Government  
Harvard University  
Cambridge, Mass. 02138

Dear Dr. Shklar,

I note your recent critique of Henry Adams in Daedalus.

Are you informed of the history of the idea of acceleration?\*  
I would have thought that exponential economic growth shaped by compound interest went back to antiquity. But I have found little reference to the idea that exponential  $\approx$  explosive before Malthus. And Adams seems to have seized on the geometric series as if it were a new frame of thinking in its application to human affairs.

Sincerely yours,

Joshua Lederberg  
Professor of Genetics

\*cf D. Bell, @146 in Sheldon and Moore, Indicators of Social Change, 1968.

cc: Daniel Bell, Dept. Sociology, Harvard

SHKLAR, J.